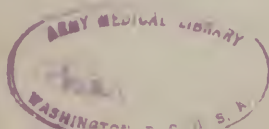
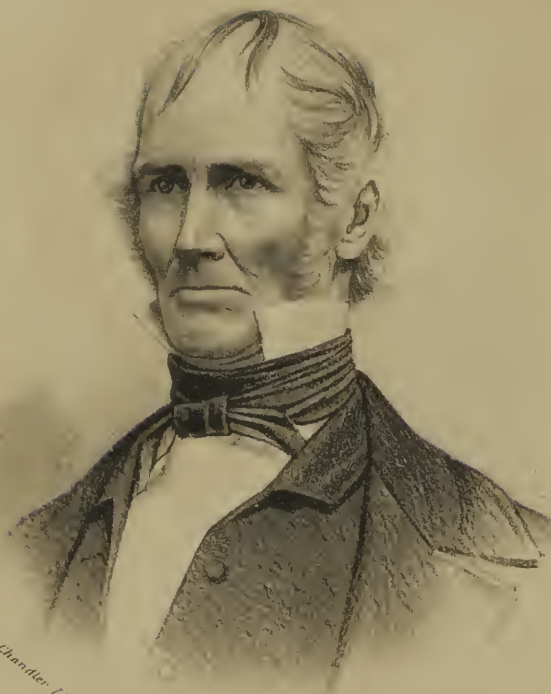


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J. H. Chandler: Lith Boston

Elijah W. Carpenter.

The Dead Speaking.

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The Dead Speaking.

A

DISCOURSE

PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL OF

DOCT. ELIJAH W. CARPENTER,

IN THE

Unitarian Church, in Bernardston,

November 30, 1855.

BY THOMAS WESTON,

Pastor of the First Church and Society in New Salem, Mass.

WITH AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING OBITUARY NOTICES, ETC.

GREENFIELD:
PRINTED BY CHARLES A. MIRICK.
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S E R M O N .

HE, BEING DEAD, YET SPEAKETH.—HEBREWS XI: 4.

How, sometimes, words of scripture, hitherto unmeaning, become the first, the deepest expression of our thought. How our hearts respond to them, as passing events reveal their hidden import. So is it in regard to the text before us. Often have we read the words—we have perused again and again the Apostle's long catalogue of the Faithful, yet, it may be, not one of those bright examples has moved us—not one instance of virtue incited us to imitation. We vaguely remember the record,—perhaps we sometimes rejoice that “we are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses,” but speaking in so indirect a manner, they can have no positive influence upon *our* hearts. But, change the circumstances—let the words before us refer to some one we have known—whose loss we feel—whose presence we miss—and what a vitality they then possess. We all revere virtue, as such. We would not lose its memory or suffer its record to be destroyed. But unless it be near us, moving our feelings and touching our hearts, we do not deem that it directly concerns

us. Yet, when in God's Providence, such instances do occur—when the hand of affliction lies heavily upon our hearts—when we miss the revered and cherished one from our midst—then more than ever, and perhaps then first of all, we realize the force of words like these before us.

And to-day, as we come, mourners, bearing to his last rest, one so dear to many hearts, is not this thought specially true, and wonderfully impressive? Now, the word comes not through the lapse of centuries—now it is not speaking of one of whom we know but little, save that he lived and died. It comes from a life just closed in our midst—from a career of honor and usefulness, just ended in man's common destiny. I need not ask, if he who was the cherished friend of all, has no teaching for us, as we mourn his loss. Does he not speak? Even now, we almost catch the tones of his well remembered voice. "Being dead, he yet speaketh."

The *life* is the true utterance—it is that, which in many an instance is more eloquent than all beside. Mere words are little, though for the moment ever so impressive; deeds may be prominent, and yet fail to move our hearts. But give us the *life*—let it record its own history—let it set its own seal—*that* will be more to us than all beside. And just before us we find the application of the truth we state. We gather here, a whole community, drawn by a common impulse, yet bearing no witness to worldly greatness of word or deed—claiming little prominence for the unobtrusive virtues of our departed friend. But, notwithstanding this, we come, believing he has a power to move our hearts—deeming we may learn a lesson from his life.

Thus believing, we would ask what the message he leaves us is, and how it shall affect us as we go back to life's duties, waiting until our change shall come.

I have said it is the life which speaks. And may it not have a more impressive lesson, than the mere fact of life's ending? Think of any you have known, and your memory of them is pleasant or the reverse, as they have left behind them the record of virtue or the stain of vice. If ever the words of Jesus are to be applied to men's lives, it is when their last acts are registered above, and, in our estimate of their characters, we are assured, that "by their fruits we *must* know them." Then they speak—then we weigh them in the balance—then we judge righteous judgment.

And in this sad moment, the memory of the past brings a mournful pleasure, assuaging the bitterness of our grief. He, whose dust we commit to the earth as it was, whose spirit has returned to God who gave it,—he, was a good man. This, simple as it is, is the greatest praise which can be bestowed on a fellow mortal. You, my friends, who gather here "weeping with those who weep," bear me witness that I speak only plain, unvarnished truth. He was a good man. A few years' knowledge of his upright course has taught me, what a life among you of nearly half a century has graven upon your hearts. True to every call of duty—ever ready to render aid when that was sought—and more than that, ever bestowing sympathy and kindness unsought—just in all his dealings—conscientious in all things—he was a pattern alike of public virtue and of private worth. Was it not so? You have seen his long and useful life. You know the worth of that char-

acter he has borne for so many years—you have appreciated his professional services—and there is hardly one of us to whom he has not come, the messenger of mercy. He is no more. “He, who by his skill saved others, has at last become the victim of disease and death.” And while I mark your sympathizing looks, as I know you are now treasuring up the memory of his virtues, need I ask if he is not still speaking. I need *not* dwell upon this point, for you will not fail to do justice to a character which has been for years an example in your midst.

But, if one word of private feeling may be pardoned, suffer me to say in passing,—I too, have lost a dear and valued friend. In the few years of our acquaintance I had learned to trust in him, and now as I come to these last sad offices, it is not alone in obedience to the command of Jesus that I mingle my tears with those of the mourning ones. Not as a duty do I stand here to-day. I would comfort the sorrowing—I would speak cheering words to those who remain as I remember the virtues of the departed—but in common with those dearest to him, must I feel that “*our friend sleepeth.*”

“He, being dead yet speaketh.”

How, I ask again, shall the dead speak to the living? I repeat what I have already said. They are heard through the memory of the past. What remains to us of those who have gone before us, but the record of their virtues? Without this we should be miserable, for we *can have* nothing else. Would you my friends,—you who have of late, been called again and again to the brink of the grave—would you be deprived of the voices which come to cheer your solitary moments—

would you be content that the memory of virtue should slumber with the dust—that cherished thoughts should vanish, as cherished forms decay? O no!—you would not—I am sure you could not—you deem that memory a legacy, dearer than any other could be—and its value increases more and more as time bears you on towards the mansion they have reached.

In these sad moments we remember how dear the departed was to us, and we seek to strengthen the cord which binds him to our hearts. And in no other way can we better accomplish this than by applying to that life, the words of the Apostle—“If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of these things.” We must do this. The soul ever clings to what is dear to it—the heart never resigns the love natural affection kindles within it. Time cannot change it, and eternity so far from destroying it, purifies and deepens it. So that the dear ones who have left our outward presence, through thought and memory still speak to our inward life.

This view is plainer as we have clearer conceptions of death itself. What is it? If voices come back from its shades—if it exerts a power upon us,—let us ask what the utterance of these voices may be, and what that power is. What is death? We see its outward change. Those we love and cherish—to whom we turn for sympathy, or to whom we cling for support, are removed from earth. “The silver cord is loosed, the golden bowl is broken.” The eye of affection is dimmed—the tone of sympathy is hushed. “Their faces are changed and they are sent away.” But this, were it all, would strike terror to our hearts. Were it

all, we might well deem death the grim monster so many have thought him. But thanks be given, we have a brighter hope. The truth as it is in Jesus reveals more than this. Gethsemane, with its fearful agony was bright with dawning hope. The Cross of Calvary, dreadful as it was, made doubly sure the promise of eternal life beyond. And the joy which burst upon the world in the Resurrection morning, as the wondering disciples stood beside the vacant tomb of the Redeemer, came in the conviction that he was not there—that he had risen. Christ was the resurrection and the life, and this transition from body to spirit, from death to life, was needful to establish his claim, to show the world that it had been even as he promised. It was the certainty of the change from death to life, which caused the despondency of the disciples to give place to the fulness of joy.

And so is it now. The memory of the past hallows the present, but our hope is brighter still, when we believe our friend shall live again;—and as we remember that only through the grave can he enter the world of spirits. Only as a man *dies*, *can* he live again. Death loses its terrors, as we regard it thus. It is a change—a transition from the present to a nobler state of being—as much a part of God's design in regard to his children, as is their birth. What though the separations consequent upon the change rend the heart and crush the spirit? Remember, “your heart shall live forever”—that it is to be fitted for a nobler sphere—that it has capacities which cannot be developed here. Think of this, and you will no longer mourn, as the mortal puts on immortality. It is beyond our feeble

comprehension—it is strange and mysterious to us. Sadly, sometimes, we ask, why, at periods when we deem their presence most essential to our happiness, these dear ones are snatched away—why the golden chain which unites parents and children and friends must be broken. But not in despondency—not with repining hearts. Let us remember what death is—the passage way to the life beyond. Let us trust in God, that he will, in his own good time change our sorrow into joy.

Death is a transition from an inferior to a higher state. And more than this, it opens to the waking spirit, a sphere of action for hitherto latent or undeveloped powers.

Let us see the bearing of this thought upon him whose life is just closed. We, his neighbors and friends—*we*, bound to him by closest ties—we who bear witness to his long career of usefulness—as we watched the slow waning of his strength—as with saddened hearts we learned that his course was finished—where would be our consolation, were there no assurance of the world beyond. While passing years matured and developed his mental powers—while to the very moment when the hand of death was upon him, the light within was unobscured—what can we believe, except that an all merciful parent has removed the loved one—that he has taken the immortal from the perishing, giving it a higher life midst brighter scenes. He is not dead, he has passed on. As well might we think to annihilate eternity itself, as to destroy that which was created for eternity. We look thus upon any life—but the thought is more impressive as we think of that just

closed. Here were powers long exerted, but still fresh and vigorous—here were hopes and desires, ever new. They must have fruition somewhere. Where, if not beyond? Thus is it death *now* speaks. Not of an ended being, but of a change to a higher and holier state. Thus the voice of friendship comes back to us, bidding us go up thither.

Once more the tones are heard. “He being dead *yet* speaketh.” “Uttered not yet comprehended,” is the monition they bring. Can we ask what that monition is? One by one, those we love are taken,—ever and anon we stand by closing graves. Do we need more frequent warnings of our own frailty? “In the midst of life we are in death.” One falls upon our right hand, and another upon our left. Clearly out from life’s mutations, come tones of warning for each one of us. Pleasant memories of ended lives, may be ours. Cheering thoughts of death may divest *it* of its gloom. But above all comes the command—“Be ye also ready.” Earth is not our abiding place—we have here no lasting treasures—friendship’s bonds must be severed and its objects pass away. All are changing—we too must change. But that transition of itself has no terrors for us. The great need is that life be made a scene of preparation for this last event. How then shall we answer the solemn question—“What is your life?” How nearly prepared are we? What of the night in which no man can work? Have we considered this? Are we ready for the change? We may speculate as we will—we may regard life, death and futurity as we choose—one great fact is before us—ever before us—until we change worlds. We may go

on in the world and of the world—but are we ready to enter at length “into the joy of our Lord.” Not too strongly can this thought be urged. Heedless we may live, until we almost forget there is a future beyond, but the teachings of hours like this must be heard. Friendship’s strongest claim—affection’s closest ties—human endearments—mortal joys—none of these things can bind us to this life, when the summons reaches us bidding us go onward. Through all time the warning comes—the sadness of this hour only repeats it, “be ye also ready.”

“He, being dead, yet speaketh.”

A sad duty still remains. Sad to us all, is it, but specially so to the mourning heart. We have dwelt upon the virtues of the departed, and in recounting them we have been comforted concerning our friend—we have found a blessing answering to our tears. But now we are to take our farewell look at that countenance, which was wont to glow with the smile of welcome—now fixed in death. We are to bid adieu to one whose usefulness we appreciate, and whose loss we feel. With saddened hearts and streaming eyes may we do this, but we will not sorrow as those without hope.

My mourning friends—“Let not your hearts be troubled.” Sadly vacant is your home now he is taken. Desolate indeed has it been in this season,* which, in other years has gathered you all about a father’s board, to receive a father’s blessing. But, be comforted. Trust in God. Rely upon the promises of Jesus.

* Dr. Carpenter’s funeral was on the day after the State Thanksgiving.

Only believe, and heaven shall open to your thought, even now. Only live as believers, and when the toils of this life give place to the joys of another, there shall be a blessed re-union in that brighter home.

The dead yet speak. Voices are coming ever. Let us listen until earth shall have no blessedness compared to that of heaven. Let us be true believers, looking on from darkness below to glory above. Let us so live here—and all shall be ours—promises, hopes, anticipations—things present and things to come—all shall be ours, as “we are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.”

A P P E N D I X.

It has been thought proper to add to the foregoing Discourse, "containing suggestions drawn from a good life, some record of that life itself," that some memorial of the deceased may be preserved, more enduring than newspaper announcements, or the recollections of a generation so rapidly passing away.

The following Obituary notice was published in the Greenfield "Gazette and Courier," for Dec. 3, 1855, for whose columns it was furnished, as the signature denotes, by Hon. Henry W. Cushman, of Bernardston.

OBITUARY.

"How happy they, who, with the tears they shed,
Can mingle hope and blessings for the dead;
View in their life, the Christian's duties done,
And in their death, the Saviour's blessings won!"

Died in Bernardston, Nov. 28, 1855, Dr. ELIJAH WOODWARD CARPENTER, aged 67 years.

Dr. Carpenter was born in Brattleboro, Vt., Sept. 7th, 1768, and was the son of a Patriot of the Revolutionary War. His early life was spent in laboring on his father's farm, and in teaching Common Schools, in which occupation he was remarkably successful. Having obtained the best education that could be secured by a faithful attendance at the Common School, and at the Academy in his native town, during the winter seasons—always accompanied by a diligent, earnest self-discipline at home—he determined at the age of about 25 years to become a Physician. After attending courses of Medical Lectures at Yale College and at the Berkshire Medical Institution, and completing his Medical Studies with Dr. Cyrus Washburn of Vernon, Vt., he commenced the practice of Medicine in Bernardston about the year 1814; and in December of that year he was married to Sophia Field of Northfield, who died May 18, 1822. Dec. 5, 1822, he married Vallonia Slate, who now survives him. A family of

seven children have been reared by his care, who daily "rise up and call him blessed."

For upwards of forty years past, Dr. C. has continued uninterruptedly, night and day, in storm and in sunshine, the practice of the profession to which he has given his whole attention and devoted all his energies. Success has, therefore, crowned his efforts. But few men have stood better with the community in which they have lived for so long a period, or with the brethren of their profession. For many years he has been a member of the Massachusetts Medical Society and recently a Councillor of that Society; and he was President at the organization of the Franklin County Medical Society, being the senior member present.

As a Physician, Dr. C. was neither a radical reformer nor an unyielding conservative; but he early applied to his profession the injunction of scripture, "prove all things and hold fast that which is good." Hence he was all his days a close student of Nature as well as of Art. In his practice he was cautious and careful,—believing that good nursing and the operation of nature were the great restorative remedies. He, therefore, had the entire confidence and love of his patients.

If it is true, as the poet asserts, that

"A wise Physician, skilled our ills to heal,
Is more than armies to the public weal;—

then Dr. C. may be put down as an eminent public benefactor. There are several families in Bernardston who have had no other family physician for nearly 40 years; a conclusive evidence of the soundness of his judgment as well as the goodness of his heart.

But his character as a *man* and a *christian* is remembered with the most veneration and respect. In all the relations of life he was, emphatically, a *true man*. No one ever even suspected his integrity; for *honesty* and *reliability* were his most marked characteristics. Hence he had the entire confidence of his fellow citizens. He was for many years an active and valuable member of the School Committee of Bernardston, and held other offices of honor and respectability.

Although Dr. C. was never a member of any church, yet the religious element in his character was marked and decided. He was a constant attendant (when his professional duties would permit) on the services of the Unitarian society, and was for many years a teacher or superintendent of the Sunday school of that society. While his judgment inclined him to the religious views of the Unitarian denomination, he was, nevertheless, far from being dogmatical; he believed that "pure religion and undefiled before God" was not confined to the narrow bounds of a society or a sect. Hence his love to man was as universal as his love to God was perpetual. His whole life of three score and seven years, was, therefore, a perfect commentary of what a good man and a Christian physician should be.

But in the nearer relation of husband and father, Dr. C. was most respected and beloved. There, at his own home and fireside, no one was ever truer or better. There, where a man will ever show his true character, he was a pattern of goodness and parental love, mingled with prudence and discretion. And it is there, that his loss will be most deeply felt.

But with so much of the respect and love of the world and of his professional brethren, our deceased friend, with whom we have walked in the journey of life these forty years, has gone to return no more forever; for, "the silken cord is loosed; the golden bowl is broken: the wheel broken at the cistern and his spirit has gone to God who gave it." While the community has lost a good physician, a true, whole-souled, conscientious man and a valuable citizen, and his family and associates an affectionate friend, yet we have every reason to believe that "our loss is his gain." If a laborious life, devoted to the best interests of humanity—if the unostentatious love of God and man as shown in forty years of toil, can give us an assurance of "rest in heaven," then we have all confidence that ere now, the joys of the Saviour whom he loved and on whom, in his last hours, as well as in life, he confidently relied, are his.

"His earthly toil is crowned with heavenly rest,
He lived to bless—he died but to be blest."

His funeral was attended at the Unitarian church in Bernardston, on Friday P. M., Nov. 30th, by a large concourse of mourning friends and a number of his Masonic brethren from the neighboring towns, of which institution he was a true and worthy member and officer. An interesting discourse was preached by Rev. Thomas Weston, of New Salem (formerly pastor of the Unitarian society of Bernardston), and the other services of the solemn occasion were performed by Rev. Messrs. Brigham, Crowley and Butler, the pastors of the other religious societies in that town.

"Let us pause; let the moral come home to the heart;
Behold how of earth all the glories depart!
Our visions are fading, our hopes but a gleam,
Our staff but a reed, and our life but a dream.

Then, O, let us look; let our prospects allure,
To scenes that can fade not, to realms that endure;
To glories, to blessings that triumph sublime,
O'er the blightings of Change and the ruins of Time."

Bernardston, Nov. 30, 1855.

H. W. C.

The following lines appeared in the Gazette for the same date as the foregoing, and were from the pen of Dr. John Brooks, of Bernardston, for many years a professional brother of the deceased.

ON THE DEATH OF E. W. CARPENTER, M. D., BERNARDSTON.

My friend, my well tried is gone;
His labors, arduous, at last are o'er;
By pure attraction heavenward drawn,
He's passed beyond this mortal shore.

Some forty years in this rude clime,
"In perils oft," by day and night,
He had the virtue, pure, sublime,
For human good to spend his might.

Or poor or rich, or high or low,
None sought his aid and sought in vain;
Nor howling winds, nor drifting snow,
E'er kept him from the bed of pain.

Darkness and storm that body frail
Did oft heroically defy,
For his was not the soul to quail
In duty, for a stormy sky.

You who have shared his faithful care,
Don't still, the recompense forget;
Think of the widow; let her share
At least what justice renders meet.

AMICUS.

The "American Republic" (published at Greenfield), for Dec. 17, 1855, contained the following article, written by Dea. Daniel Slate, of Bernardston.

MR. EDITOR—SIR:—You will please insert a few lines in your paper, in reference to the late departed, Dr. E. W. Carpenter, of Bernardston. I do not propose to eulogize the departed, but merely to refer to a few facts peculiar to myself and the deceased, trusting that those *facts* recalled, might serve to lighten the sorrows of the respected widow and children.

More than forty years since, under the direction of Dr. Cyrus Washburn of Vernon, Vt., the departed commenced his acquaintance with myself and family as a physician. This acquaintance has continued unbroken to the day of his death. A loved companion and four children have I resigned to the grave under his care, without the least suspicion that he had erred, *intentionally*. Yes, more than this, I have watched days and weeks with his patients, have closed the eyes of many, and seen many restored, with the same good faith that he was ever true to his calling. Never was I at a

loss to administer medicine under his direction, for each paper and phial contained those plain, intelligible initials of his, that ever put the eye and mind at rest. He might have erred in what he gave, but never in quantity and kind as he intended. Through our forty years of attendance together upon the sick and afflicted, I have ever found him faithful to the call of the poor and needy. Often, yes very often, have I thought and said to him, this is *too* much for your slender frame, to meet this storm or cold night. His answer, always decided, was the motto and ruling principle of his professional life. "We must not let people suffer and die when we can assist them." Thus I learned to meet him at the bedside of the sick and afflicted, equally attentive to those who had nothing to recompense him, as those who might flatter his attendance with rewards. I do not say that he never erred on this point, but that he was an extraordinary attendant upon the poor and destitute. Let this console his companion and children, that what he thus spent for the destitute is a harvest laid up above, of which they are sure to receive their appropriate shares.

The closing up of his life was without a wish to change his prospects of life, or to continue a single day. Perfectly sensible of his departure was he, till quite the last hours, and not a wish or a fear did he manifest, even to his nearest friend, that death was anything more to him, than laying down to rest. His peaceful and quiet life is now speaking to this whole community to correct that hasty, *oppressive* spirit, which ever so much annoyed our departed friend.

"How still and peaceful is the grave,
There the weary pilgrim rests
From all the toils he bore."

FROM A FRIEND.

The following resolutions were published in the "Gazette and Courier," for Dec. 24, 1855.

At a meeting of the Bernardston Cemetery Association, held Dec. 10th, 1855, the following resolutions, relative to the decease of Dr. E. W. Carpenter, the former Secretary of the corporation, were passed:

RESOLVED, That we deeply regret the decease of our associate and friend, Dr. E. W. Carpenter, late Secretary and Treasurer of this Society; that in his death this association has lost a valuable, efficient, and faithful officer; the community an intelligent, true-hearted and honest man, and his family a dutiful and affectionate parent and friend.

RESOLVED, That this association tender to the family of our deceased friend the sympathy which their bereavement so much demands, and that

our thanks are due to them for the important service rendered to this cemetery corporation by our late Secretary and Treasurer.

RESOLVED, That our cemetery is re-consecrated in our hearts by the recent death of so many who have by their labors and their services contributed so much to improve and ornament the ground they were the first to occupy, and it will be a melancholy pleasure to continue the work they so well began.

RESOLVED, That these resolutions be entered on the records of this corporation, and a copy, signed by the President and Secretary, be transmitted to the family of Dr. Carpenter.

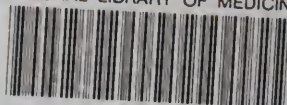
HENRY W. CUSHMAN, *President*.

S. N. BROOKS, *Secretary*.

The accompanying engraved Portrait of Dr. Carpenter was executed by L. Grozelier, of Boston, and is regarded as a very correct likeness. The Photograph, from which it was copied, was taken by B. F. Popkins, of Greenfield, Mass., in January, 1855, when Dr. C. was 66 years old.

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